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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Making Cider at Home." Information from the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. D. A. Menu and recipe from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Farm Manufacture of Unfermented Apple Juice, No. 1264, and "Eggs at Any Meal, Leaflet 39."

--ooOoo--

The call of the wind is much stronger than the call of household duties on bright brisk days like yesterday. Nothing seems to satisfy me on such autumn days like a long walk over the fields or up country roads where I can enjoy the bright foliage and smell the fragrant smoke from burning leaves.

Yesterday My Next-Door Neighbor and I both played hooky. We absolutely abandoned our homes and families right after lunch and ran off into the country. As a result we had a splendid afternoon and improved our dispositions enormously.

"This reminds me," said My Neighbor, as we rambled along, "of that trip Frank and I took last year to see the relatives. Yes, just about this time of year --- or a little earlier --- we were driving across Pennsylvania and up through New York State and New England. How we did enjoy the scenery! The bright foliage and the colorful displays of products for sale in front of farm after farm. Great yellow piles of pumpkins, boxes of red apples and baskets of grapes, to say nothing of the amber colored fresh cider. Dear me. I have no idea how much sweet cider I consumed on that trip but I'm sure it was a shocking amount. Frank made a great deal of fun of me because I simply couldn't pass those glass jugs of that pleasant drink without wanting some."

That's just the way I feel about good sweet cider. And a lot of other people must feel the same way because cider is often called the great American beverage. According to the figures, cider is made and consumed in greater quantity than any other fruit juice. The scientists in the Bureau of Plant Industry say that cider is our most popular and least expensive beverage juice and that it is manufactured on a small scale on farms or in homes in many parts of the United States.

Unfortunately, however, this good beverage, which we might be using the whole year around, is now mostly a seasonal product, made only during the period immediately following the apple harvest and consumed within a few days. Yes, popular as sweet cider is during the apple season, at the close it disappears from the market and is practically impossible to get for the rest of the year. As a result, even in apple growing districts and in the families of

apple growers, synthetic soft drinks often take the place of this healthful fruit drink for most of the months of the year.

The trouble is that too few people who make cider know how to preserve it so that it will be available in sweet condition at all seasons of year. Quantities of apples go to waste every fall and quantities of apple juice is allowed to ferment and become vinegar while its place as a beverage is taken by synthetic soft drinks. Any thrifty person --- and aren't we all interested in the subject of thrift these days? --- Any thrifty and practical person can see how unfortunate it is that so many apples, that might be turned into a wholesome refreshing beverage for year-round use, are allowed to go wholly to waste. It is especially unfortunate since preserving apple juice is a very simple process, as easily mastered as canning fruit and requiring no more special equipment. Like canning, success depends on observing a few simple rules.

These rules are all down in black and white in a bulletin called "Farm Manufacture of Unfermented Apple Juice." The number of this free bulletin on cider making is Twelve Sixty-Four. The directions for making sweet cider on a small scale for home use --- or on a larger scale --- are all right on those pages. The title again is "Farm Manufacture of Unfermented Apple Juice." You may have the bulletin by writing me in care of this station, or by writing direct to the Dept. of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. (That, by the way, holds good for most of the free bulletins that I mention.)

The cider bulletin answers a lot of questions people have been asking me lately. A frequent question is about using preservatives in cider.

Here's what the bulletin has to say about that: The use of preservatives in fruit juices is entirely unnecessary, if the juice is properly pasteurized and sealed. Many persons have the mistaken idea that it is practically impossible to preserve apple juice merely by the use of heat and sealing, without the addition of some chemical substance to act as a preservative. This notion is entirely incorrect.

The Food and Drug Administration does not encourage the use of preservatives in food, although sulphur dioxide and benzoate of soda are permitted in cider and other food under certain conditions. But there is no advantage in attempting to preserve cider for any length of time in this way. No preservatives used in lawful amounts or in amounts not injurious to health, will entirely prevent fermentation in juices that have not been pasteurized or that are left opened to the air. Using chemicals, then, is ineffective or unnecessary, and more than that --- objectionable.

Complete directions for pasteurizing sweet cider are given in the bulletin.

Another question: "Which kind of apples give cider the best flavor -- early or late varieties?"

Answer: Because summer or early apples contain less sugar, more malic acid, and fairly large amounts of tannin, they do not make as good cider as the later or winter varieties. Summer apples yield juice that is tart and

astrigent with a bitter aftertaste that makes them unpleasant to most palates. The cider maker who can choose between summer and winter varieties would do well to use the summer varieties for apple butters, marmalades and similar products, and use the mature winter apples for cider making. These give cider a better flavor, higher sugar content, and greater food value. By blending two or three varieties of winter apples a better grade of cider is produced.

Monday is a day when there are generally several left-overs from Sunday dinner in the refrigerator. But there are Mondays following a day away from home, when the refrigerator has little to offer. It is for such an evening that our menu today has been planned --- a supper using a few left-overs --- some fruit perhaps for a salad, and some odds and ends in the vegetable line for seasoning Spanish sauce for an omelet.

The menu: Omelet with Spanish sauce; Baked potatoes; Salad of tart apple and Tokay grapes with or without nuts; Coffee cake or cinnamon rolls; Hot coffee.

The recipe for the omelet is to be found in the egg leaflet. The egg leaflet's full name is "Eggs at Any Meal". And its number, if you prefer to order it by number, is Thirty-Nine. It tells how to make a fluffy omelet and how to make a flat one. It also suggests omelet variations. You can make these variations by adding chopped fried ham or bacon, or grated cheese, or cooked vegetables, or chopped onion, green pepper or celery to the egg mixture before it is cooked. Or you can spread these additions over half the cooked omelet before it is folded and turned onto the platter. Or you can serve a plain omelet, either fluffy or flat, and put these extras in a hot sauce to pour over it. That's what we are planning for our Monday supper menu.

The ingredients for the Spanish sauce are:

2 tablespoons of chopped onion
2 tablespoons of butter or other fat
1 tablespoon of flour
2 cups of canned tomatoes
1/2 cup of chopped celery
1 green pepper chopped
4 tablespoons of chopped cooked ham or bacon
Chopped parsley, and
Salt and pepper, to taste

Better check to see that you didn't miss any of these ten items. (Repeat.)

To make the sauce, cook the onion in the fat for a few minutes. Sprinkle the flour over the onion and quickly stir in the tomatoes, celery, green pepper. Then simmer for about 20 minutes. Add the ham or bacon, parsley, salt and pepper and serve at once.

For the apple and grape salad, use red apples for color. Wash, core and dice the apples but don't take off the skin. Cut the grapes in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. Use fruit salad dressing for this colorful fall salad. Add chopped nuts if you prefer.

"Tomorrow: "House and Garden Jobs for October."

